SPEECH

OF

HON. LEWIS CASS, OF MICHIGAN,

1782 - 1866

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 10, 1847.

The Bill making a special appropriation of Three Millions to bring the war with Mexico to a speedy and honorable conclusion, being under consideration—

Mr. CASS said: In the remarks I propose to submit, Mr. President, I shall invert the natural order of arrangement. I intend to present my views of the causes and course of the war thus far, and also the reasons, which will induce me to vote for the appropriation of three millions of dollars. To which I shall add my views of the best mode of proceeding in the prosecution of the war. I shall begin, however, with the two latter subjects.

I do not rise, sir, with the emotions so visibly felt and so eloquently described by the distinguished Senator from South Carolina. I do not consider this country, or its institutions in the slightest danger. Never was it more free, powerful, or prosperous, than at the present moment, when untimely warnings come to assail us. The public sentinel may sleep upon his watchtower. In the distant horizon, not a cloud as big as the prophet's hand, is to be seen, which is to overspread the heavens, and to burst in thunder and in tempest upon us. We are, indeed, engaged in a foreign war, which demands the solicitude of every good citizen. But the scene of its operations is two thousand miles distant; and, come the worst that may, we can at any time withdraw into our own country. Disgraceful, indeed, would be such a movement; but it would be still better than the evils predicted, and according to the nature of the apprehensions expressed, it would terminate the danger.

Mr. President, it gives me great pain to hear any allusions to the dissolution of this Confederacy; and of all the places in this republic, this high place is the last, in which they should be expressed. The Constitution is in no danger. It has survived many a shock, and it will survive many more. There are those now in the Senate—and I am among them—who were born before it came into being.

We have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength, till the approach of physical infirmities, the kindly warnings of nature, bid us prepare for another and an untried world. And the Constitution, too, has grown with its growth and strengthened with its strength, till from three millions it governs twenty millions of people, and has made them the happiest community upon the face of the globe. But it is yet fresh in its strength. No infirmity has come to tell us, that its dissolution is near. It is no longer an experiment, but experience; no longer a promise, but performance. It has fulfilled all, and more than all, its most sanguine advocates dared predict. It is at this moment stronger in the affections of the American people, than at any other period of its existence Like the cliff of eternal granite, which overlooks the ocean, and drives back the ceaseless waves, that assail its base, so will this Constitution resist the assaults, that may be made upon it, come how or when or whence they may. In the providence of God, no such lot as ours was ever conferred upon a people. What we have been and are, the past and the present have told, and are telling us. What we are to be, the future will tell to those, who are to come after us, to their joy or sorrow, as we cherish or reject the blessings we enjoy. If we are not struck with judicial blindness, as were God's chosen people of old, and punished for national offences by national punishments, we shall cling to this Constitution, as the mariner clings to the last plank, when night and the tempest close around him; and we shall cling to it the stronger, as the danger is greater.

Mr. President, I shall not touch any of the topics before us, as a sectional man. I view them, and shall present them, as an American citizen, looking to the honor and interests of his country, and of his whole country. In these great questions of national bearing, I acknowledge no geographical claims. What is best for the United States is best for me; and in that spirit alone shall I pursue the discussion.

A strong desire pervades this country, that a region, extending west of our present possessions to the Pacific ocean, should be acquired and become part of our Confederacy. The attempt to purchase it was made during the administration of General Jackson, and the hope of succeeding has never since been wholly abandoned. I will not detain the Senate by spreading out the reasons, which render such a measure desirable. It would give to us a large territory, a great deal of it calculated for American settlement and cultivation, and it would connect us with the great western ocean, giving us

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a front along its shores in connexion with Oregon of, perhaps, thirteen or fourteen degrees of latitude. It would give us also the magnificent bay of St. Francisco, one of the noblest anchorages in the world, capable of holding all the navies of the earth; and from its commanding position, controlling, in some measure, the trade of the northern Pacific. But, sir, besides these advantages, commercial and geographical, there are important political considerations, which point to extension as one of the great measures of safety for our institutions.

In Europe, one of the social evils is concentration. Men are brought too much and kept too much in contact. There is not room for expansion. Minds of the highest order are pressed down by adverse circumstances, without the power of free exertion. There is no starting-point for them. Hence the struggles, that are ever going on, in our crowded communities. And hence the *emeutes*, which disturb and alarm the Governments of the Old World, and which must one day or other shake them to their centre. Questions of existence are involved in them, as well as questions of freedom. I trust we are far removed from all this; but to remove us further yet, we want almost unlimited power of expansion. That is our safety valve. The mightiest intellects which when compressed in thronged cities, and hopeless of their future, are ready to break the barriers around them the moment they enter the new world of the West, feel their freedom, and turn their energies to contend with the works of creation; converting the woods and the forests into towns, and villages, and cultivated fields, and extending the dominion of civilization and improvement over the domain of nature. This process has been going on since the first settlement of our country; and while it continues, whatever other evils betide us, we shall be free from the evils of a dense population, with scanty means of subsistence, and with no hope of advancement.

The Senator from South Carolina has presented some views of our augmenting population as true as they are striking. At the commencement of his life and of mine, this country contained three millions of inhabitants, giving a rate of increase, which doubles our numbers every twenty-two years. There are those yet living, who will live to see our Confederacy numbering a population, equal to the Chinese empire. This stupendous progress outstrips the imagination. The mind cannot keep up with the fact. *It toils after it in vain;* and as we increase in numbers and extend in space, our power of communication is still more augmented. The telegraph has come with its wonderful process to bind still closer the portions of this empire, as these recede from its capital. It is the most admirable invention of modern days. We can now answer the sublime interrogatory put to Job: "Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are!" Yes, the corruscations of heaven, man has reduced to obedience, and they say unto him, here we are. It is yet in its infancy, an experiment, rather than an arrangement. Who can tell where future improvements may conduct it, or what sway it may hereafter exercise over the social and political condition of the world? What people it may bring together and keep together by the power of instantaneous communication? Or how the events of distant nations, told almost to the other side of the globe, the very moment of their occurrence, may affect the future destiny of mankind? I have been industriously engaged seventeen days in coming from Detroit to Washington, and the journey between here and Baltimore once cost me two days. We have now a process within our reach, by which we can send to California and receive answers from there more than twenty times a day. I shall not pursue these investigations: they are sufficiently obvious in their general bearing, though the practical result of this great measure is beyond the reach of human vision.

We are at war with Mexico, brought on by her injustice. Before peace is established, we have a right to require a reasonable indemnity, either pecuniary or territorial, or both, for the injuries we have sustained. Such a compensation is just in itself, and in strict accordance with the usages of nations. One memorable proof of this has passed in our own times. When the allies entered Paris, after the overthrow of Napoleon, they compelled the French Government to pay them an indemnity of 1500,000,000 francs, equal to $300,000,000. In the condition of Mexico, there is no disposition in this country to ask of her an unreasonable sacrifice. On the contrary, the wish is everywhere prevalent, and I am sure the Government participate in it, that we should demand less, than we are entitled to. No one proposes a rigid standard, by which the indemnity shall be measured. But there are certain territorial acquisitions, which are important to us, and whose cession cannot injure Mexico, as she never can hold them permanently. We are willing, after settling the indemnity satisfactorily, to pay for the excess in money. The Senator from South Carolina has stated the proposition very distinctly, "any excess on our part we are willing to meet, as we ought, by the necessary payment to Mexico."

Information received by the President, during the last session of Congress, induced him to believe, that if an appropriation for this purpose were made, the difficulties between the two countries might soon be terminated by an amicable arrangement. A proposition for that purpose was submitted to us in secret session, debated and approved by this Senate. It was then introduced into the Legislature with open doors, passed the House of Representatives, and came to us. Here it was discussed until the stroke of the clock, when the hand on the dial-plate, pointed to 12, struck its funeral knell. In his message at the commencement of this Congress, the President renewed his suggestion, and the whole matter is now before us. Such is its history.

It is now objected to, as an immoral proposition, a kind of bribery, either of the Government of Mexico, or of its Commanding General; and the honorable Senator from Maryland, who is not now in his seat, said emphatically and solemnly, "that this project of terminating the war by dis-'membering a sister republic, is so revolting to my 'moral sense of propriety, honor, and justice, that 'I should see my arms palsied by my side, rather 'than agree to it." The "dismemberment" of

which the honorable member speaks is previously defined by himself. That is the term he gives the acquisition, but I call it purchase. He says the money will go to Santa Ana and pay the army, which will thus be secured, and the poor "down-trodden" people be transferred to this country "in spite of themselves," in consequence of this "pouring of gifts into the hands of their tyrants."

Now, sir, there is no such proposition, as I understand it, nor anything like it. The object of the President has been distinctly stated by himself. It is to have the money ready, and if a satisfactory treaty is signed and ratified, then to make a payment into the treasury of Mexico, which will be disposed of by the Government of that country, agreeably to its own laws. The propositions, both at the last session of Congress and at this, were identical. The difference in the phraseology of the appropriation has been satisfactorily explained by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and seems to me of very little consequence. Be that as it may, it is not a subject, which can produce of itself any practical difficulty. For if there is any member of the Senate, who is willing to vote for the appropriation in the form, in which it was presented last year, and is unwilling to vote for it in this, the Committee on Foreign Relations will cheerfully assent to the substitution of the latter for the former. "The principle is wrong," says the honorable Senator from Maryland. But, in my view, the principle of this appropriation, and of the other appropriation is precisely the same. And yet, the honorable Senator from Maryland voted for the former, while he reprobates the present, and a number of Senators on the other side of the chamber voted the last session in the same manner. If the proposition was bribery or unprincipled then, it seems to me it must be so now. Expediency may change with time, but right and wrong undergo no change.*

As to the idea, that such an arrangement is something like bribery, it seems to me it will not bear the slightest investigation. A strange kind of bribery this! The appropriation called for was preceded by a message from the President to the Senate in secret session. It was then received in both Houses, and the doors thrown open. It was discussed fully, not to say warmly, and was finally lost by the lapse of time. In secret session thirty-three Senators voted for it. It again takes a prominent place in the President's message at the commencement of the present session of Congress. It has been before us between two and three months, and has been borne upon the wings of the wind to the remotest portions of our country. It entered Mexico long ago, and has been proclaimed upon every house-top in town and country. It is known to every citizen of that republic, who knows anything of political affairs, whether the blood in his veins is Castilian, or Moorish, or Aztec. It has passed to Europe, and received the condemnations of many of its journals. Had it been approved there, I should doubt its policy or its justice. And for aught I know, it is travelling along the canals of the Celestial Empire. I repeat, a strange kind of bribery this! That is an offence which does its work in secret. This is a proposition made by one nation to another, in the face of the world. It is not to enable Mexico to carry on the war, as an honorable Senator seems to suppose, for it is not to be paid till the war is over.

Mr. MOREHEAD inquired if the honorable Senator considered the present proposition as confining the President, in the disbursement of the money, to the purposes to be specified in the treaty, as the resolution of the last session did?

Mr. CASS said, that his understanding of the proposition was, that the money was not to be paid, until a treaty was agreed upon. The payment was not to precede the treaty, but to follow it.

Mr. WEBSTER, (rising.) Will the honorable Senator allow me——

Mr. CASS. I will hear you with pleasure, but I cannot answer any more questions. I have said that no money is to be paid until a treaty is ratified.

Mr. WEBSTER. I was merely going to remark, that this is the very turning point.

Mr. CASS. I will sit down and hear the honorable Senator, but he must not ask me any questions. If he does, I shall not answer them, till I have concluded my remarks.

Mr. WEBSTER resumed his seat.

Mr. C. continued:

The whole proposition results from the peculiar condition of Mexico. Her Government is ephemeral. Its members are born in the morning and die in the evening. Administrations succeed one another, like the scenes of a theatre, rather than the events of life, and still less of events in the life of a nation. The rulers do not dare to do justice in such a case as this. It might cost them their places, to which they hold on, as tenaciously, as though their tenure were a secure one. There is a strong excitement in that country against us. Nothing shows this more distinctly, than the scene, which lately passed there, when their President swore that the nation would never yield one inch of its territory, nor make peace with the invader, till his foot was off its soil. A dangerous resolution to be thus publicly proclaimed, and one more easily proclaimed than kept. The sublime and the ridiculous may so easily touch, that nations should be chary of such exhibitions, which may belong to the domain of the one or of the other, as subsequent circumstances stamp their character. Whatever judgment, however, history may pronounce upon this ceremony in Mexico, it is significant enough of the disposition of the people towards us. Hence the difficulty of the Government is increased, and hence the necessity of their strengthening themselves. Their revenues are drying up. They are always in debt in all their departments, civil and military. By a prompt payment into their treasury upon the ratification of a treaty, the Government will be enabled to satisfy the most pressing demands, and thus to do an act of justice at home which will

* It is but an act of justice to state that the Senator from Maryland referred to was not in his seat. Mr. C.'s remarks are here given as they were delivered. The colleague of Mr. JOHNSON, however, Mr. PEARCE, as soon as Mr. CASS had concluded, stated that his colleague had been misunderstood, and that the proposed appropriation of last year, and the appropriation of this year, were so widely different in their phraseology, as to render it perfectly consistent to vote for the one and to reject the other.

counteract any ill effects of an act of justice abroad. And this is the very point of the whole matter. We may thus tempt them to do right, while so many other strong circumstances tempt them to do wrong. As to the application of this money, after it reaches the treasury of Mexico, it is no question of ours, any more than was the application of the consideration money paid to France and Spain for the purchase of Louisiana and of Florida. We cannot follow it, and it must take its fate with the other resources of the country. It has one advantage, however, and that is its publicity. If the silver or gold were carried by wagons to the palace of the Government, the transaction could have no more publicity, than it has now. And this throws upon the authorities a much graver responsibility, than do the ordinary payments, and one less likely to be abused. If all this is bribery, I am fully prepared to take my share in the guilt of it. If it is bribery, let the honest governments of Europe make the most of it.

As to the comparison, instituted by the honorable Senator from Maryland, between this act and an attempt of the Mexican Government to bribe General Taylor, it certainly gives me very little trouble. We have nothing to do with Santa Anna, as the General of an army. We deal with the Government of Mexico. The very authority that makes the treaty is the authority, to which the payment is to be made. If General Taylor were the American Government, and had power to cede away a portion of the American territory, the analogy would then exist in fact, as it now exists but in fancy. And this obvious consideration answers all the objections presented by the Senator, when he expresses such an apprehension, that the money would slip from our fingers, before we secured a consideration. Not a dollar is to be paid, till the treaty is ratified, and the country thus made ours.

Passing now, sir, from the consideration of this subject to the course before us, I would observe, that there are but three plans of operation, by which we can escape from the difficulties of our position.

The first, is an abandonment of the war, and an inglorious return to our own country.

The second, is the establishment of a line over such a portion of the enemy's territory, as we think proper, and holding the country on this side of it without any further military operations.

The third, is a vigorous prosecution of the war, agreeably to the public expectation, and the experience of the world.

As to the first, sir, I do not place it in the category of things possible, but only in the category of things proposed, and I cast it from me with contempt.

The second, sir, is a very different proposition; supported by high names, civil and military, and was yesterday presented to us, with great power of argument and beauty of illustration by the distinguished Senator from South Carolina. I shall state as succinctly as I can the reasons which induce me to consider this as an inexpedient, not to say an impossible, proposition.

A plan of operations, seeking to hold a portion of a country, properly guarded by fortresses, and furnished with the necessary lines of communication, and seeking to do this, without publicly announcing the nature of the plan, and the determination to adhere to it, is one thing. An attempt to occupy another portion of country, open, unfortified, with no natural boundaries, and penetrable in all directions, and publicly proclaiming this system as an invariable one, not to be departed from, is another, and quite a different thing. From the Gulf of Mexico, following the boundaries of the provinces now in our possession, to the Pacific ocean, is but little short of two thousand miles. Far the greater portion of it is open, and much of it unoccupied. Instead of any lines of communication, natural or artificial, where it must necessarily be crossed, it may be crossed anywhere. It is a mere paper line—a descriptive one. For hundreds of miles on each side of a great part of the line, the country is the same; roamed over rather than possessed by nomadic tribes, and affording subsistence and shelter to the beasts of the earth. If you assume such a boundary, you necessarily place yourself upon the defensive. You must establish troops along it, and these must be scattered, occupying different positions. Your enemy thus acts in masses, while you act in detachments. If he attack you, and succeed, you are destroyed. If he attack you, and is discomfited, he falls back, behind his impenetrable barrier. A snake, clutched by an eagle, is one of the emblems of the armorial bearings of Mexico. If this plan of fighting to an air line is adopted, the proud bird will soon be powerless, and the reptile will coil itself up to strike at its leisure and its pleasure. In such a state of offensive-defensive warfare, the enemy chooses his time, when you least expect him, or are least able to resist him. He gains your rear, and cuts off your convoys and supplies, and thus reduces you to weakness and distress. Or he strikes you in a period of sickness, in a climate, to which you are unaccustomed, and whose alternations do not affect him. You cannot pursue him into his country, for the moment you do that, you confess the folly of your plan, and abandon it forever. If you cross your boundary, you must cross it to hold on, and then you have a new boundary, or, in other words, a system of unlimited operations. If you do not cross to hold on, what will you do? Your very object in crossing is to chastise the enemy; and you must pursue him to his fortresses and capture them, if he has any; or you must fight him in the open field and disperse him. I repeat, if you do not do this, you may as well stop at your boundary; look civilly at the retiring enemy, take off your hats, and say: Good bye gentlemen; we will wait till you come back again. The riches of Crœsus would melt away, before such a system of fighting-no-fighting. The laurels of Napoleon would wither and die. No exchequer could bear the expense. No public sentiment the dishonor. There is but one such campaign, sir, recorded in all history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, true or fabulous, and that is the campaign of Sisyphus. It was an eternal one. Sanction the plan proposed, and yours will be eternal too. This stone will never be rolled to the top of the mountain. It would be a never-ending, ever-renewing war. The distinguished Senator from South Carolina thinks, that four regiments and three fortresses along this line, and one regiment

and a few small vessels for California, "would be ample for its defence." The line, as described by himself, is this: "Beginning at the mouth of the 'Rio del Norte, and continuing up the Paso del 'Norte, or southern boundary of New Mexico, 'which nearly coincide, and then due west to the 'Gulf of California, striking it, according to the 'maps before us, nearly at its head."

Here, sir, is a line across the continent from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California; and this line is to be so protected by five regiments, three fortresses, and a few small vessels, as to be impervious to the rancheros and other light troops of Mexico—the best and most indefatigable horsemen, perhaps, in the world. I have enumerated, in these means of defence, a few small vessels, because they form part of the *projet* of the honorable Senator. How they are to be employed in defending any part of the line, as I do not understand, I will not attempt to explain.* If the soldiers were stationed equidistant upon this boundary, they would probably be a mile apart. It seems to me, sir—and I say it with all respect—that we might as well attempt to blockade the coast of Europe by stationing a ship in the middle of the Atlantic. As to the Rio Grande, it is no defensive line at all. Rivers, when best guarded, are found to afford very insufficient protection. But in the great country south and west of us, yet in a state of nature, or slowly emerging from it, streams are entitled to very little consideration in defensive operations. Who is there, that has passed his life in the West, and has not crossed them a hundred times by swimming, in canoes, upon logs, upon rafts, and upon horses? Is it to be supposed, that an active Mexican, accustomed to the woods from his infancy, would hesitate to dash into a stream, and cross it, almost as readily as if it were unbroken ground?

But long defensive lines, even when skilfully constructed and carefully guarded, are but feeble *barriers* against courage and enterprise. How long did the Roman wall keep the North Britons out of England? How long did the Grecian wall of the Lower Empire keep the Turks out of Constantinople, and the horse-tails of their Pashas from the cathedral of Saint Sophia? And the Chinese wall—an immense labor of man—that, too, opened to the Tartars, and enabled the chief of roving bands to ascend the oldest throne in the world. The best wall a country can have is the breasts of its citizens, free, prosperous, and united.

But, sir, there is another consideration, not to be overlooked. How could you keep your own citizens on this side of your imaginary line? The honorable Senator tells us, their spirit of adventure can hardly be restrained in time of peace, and that there is always danger, they will push into the Mexican provinces. But in time of war—even of a new kind of war like this—they would feel, that the enemy's country was open to them, and their incursions would keep up a continued state of hostilities.

The Senator says, that offensive wars look to the subjugation of a country. I do not thus read the history of the world, nor the history of nations. I consider offensive wars, as necessary means for the attainment of certain just objects. Our war with England, in 1812, was an offensive one; but no American, even in his wildest dreams, ever expected to subjugate that country. Our object was to compel her to do us justice, by injuring her wherever we could. History is filled with instances of offensive wars, undertaken with no expectation of subjugation. Indeed, were it otherwise, there would be few offensive wars, unless those undertaken by very large states against very small ones. If it were so, perhaps the world would be better off. That question, however, is not before me, and I shall not travel out of my way to meet it.

The Senator says we have gained six hundred thousand square miles, and who would continue the war to secure the acknowledgment of Mexico? But, sir, it is that very acknowledgment, which is to give us the country. Until the right, which cession gives, is added to the right derived from conquest, we can make no acquisition of territory. We are still at war. It is that very act of acknowledgment, which constitutes peace, and without which there can be no peace.

The honorable Senator speaks of certainty. How far he requires it in the anticipation of events, I do not know. These are his words:

> "Is there any certainty—for I go on certainties now more than probabilities—can any gentleman see any certainty of Mexico yielding to our terms, even supposing this first campaign should find us in the city of Mexico?"

I, for one, can see no such certainty, sir. Indeed it does not belong to man to see it. There is scarcely any other certainty in this life, than that it will be terminated, and soon terminated, by death. Almost all is doubtful around us, especially in the operations of war. We are told from the highest authority, "that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" and every day's experience confirms the truth of the proposition. Some of the most splendid achievements in war, from Salamis to Monterey, have been gained under apparently adverse circumstances, and against great disparity of force. If we are only to fight, when victory is certain, we shall never fight at all. The slightest circumstances, which human sagacity could not foresee nor human power overcome, have many times decided the destiny of nations.

The Senator also has submitted many sound observations respecting the diversity of character, of races, and of institutions, which exist between us and Mexico, and he deprecates, with equal zeal and justice, the union of the Mexican people and ours. I fully agree, sir, in all that. It would be a deplorable amalgamation. No such evil will happen to us in our day. We do not want the people of Mexico, either as citizens or subjects. All we want is a portion of territory, which they nominally hold, generally uninhabited, or, where inhabited at all, sparsely so, and with a population, which would soon recede, or identify itself with

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* It is due to the distinguished Senator from South Carolina to state that, when Mr. Cass had concluded his remarks, he observed that he had misunderstood him, as to the defence of the line; that the fortresses and the four regiments would be appropriated but to a part of it. If so, a large portion of the country would be left undefended, and the whole plan of operation would fail. Such a plan, to be effectual, must guard the whole line.

ours. The Senator says, speaking of Mexico, 'what are you to do with the territory?" I answer, nothing at all, as a permanent acquisition. "Will you," says the Senator, "incorporate it in your Union?" Certainly not. We shall hold it as a means of procuring an honorable peace. And such a peace it may be made to procure for us.

Some of the remarks of the honorable Senator I regretted to hear: those which cast doubts upon the power of this country to prosecute this war to an honorable conclusion—such a conclusion, indeed, as alone will be satisfactory to the American people. I am not going, Mr. President, to subject these views to any severity of investigation. I should do it with reluctance in any case, and I could not do in this. My unfeigned respect for the distinguished Senator would prohibit it. While I claim for myself and yield to others the most unlimited range of discussion; and while I do not call in question the truth of the sentiment, uttered during the last war, that a public man has a right to speak to his country, though he may be overheard by the enemy, still there are discretionary limits, which it seems to me it were better not to pass. Every word, that is spoken here, is heard upon the plateau of Mexico. Legislative discussions, with open doors, are, in this age of progress, discussions before the world. As we watch the indications of public opinion in Mexico, and seek them in the journals of the day, the same universal messengers carry back to that country all we are saying, and doing, and proposing. Far be it from me to question the conduct, or the motives of any honorable Senator. I believe, that every member of this body is actuated by as pure intentions, as I am myself. But I suggest, is it prudent to say here, that it is uncertain whether we shall be able to reach the city of Mexico during this campaign, and that if we do not, she will be encouraged, and we discouraged; she fortified, and we irresolute? Is it prudent to say, that there are doubts, whether we can raise the means for another, more costly, and at a greater distance? To say that the spirit of volunteering is gone! To say, that for a third campaign, there will be no longer resources in treasury notes? Exhausted, perhaps more than exhausted, by this single campaign? To ask, if we can borrow? If we can lay taxes? What taxes, &c.? To ask, if we can collect them in certain States, that are embarrassed; and to answer no! To inquire, if there will be sufficient unanimity and zeal in the prosecution of the war, to warrant the belief, that Congress would grant the necessary supplies!

These are irksome inquiries to me, Mr. President, and I shall not pursue them. If all this is so, we are already unfaithful to the trust transmitted to us, purchased by the exertion and blood of our fathers, and left as a precious legacy for those, who are to come after us. The lofty position of the distinguished Senator from South Carolina, his reputation—a European one, in fact—his great services, and his pure character, give extraordinary weight to all the sentiments he utters; and the deeper, therefore, is my regret. If these apprehensions are well founded, there is another point of application for the epigrammatic remark of a French statesman, speaking of us in the earlier periods of our history, who said, "*If such is the youth* of that *republic*, what *will be its old age?*"—Sir, it will have no old age.

The eyes of Europe are upon us. Nothing worse can happen to us, than to stop ingloriously. That is our last resource. We have, then, but to prosecute this war, as other wars are prosecuted by other nations. We have but to discard dangerous experiments, and to hold on to the experience of the world. We must breast ourselves to the shock. We must continue our occupation of Mexico, and push the invasion still farther. We must do as other people have done—we must attack and disperse her armies, take possession of her towns, and capture her fortresses. There seems to be some analogy between the cities of Paris and Mexico. Both are the native seats of revolutions. Both exert a preponderating influence over their respective countries. I have no right to give an authoritative opinion, respecting the expediency of a demonstration upon the capital. Still, I do not hesitate to say, that I think it would be a wise and probably decisive measure. It would disperse the Government, and weaken, if not break, its hold upon public opinion. It would divert the revenues from them to us. And, in addition to this resource, I agree fully with the honorable Senator from Missouri in opinion, that we should call contributions to our aid, in defraying our military expenses. It is a legitimate means of support for hostile armies. It belongs to the present age, and not exclusively to the past. During all the wars in Europe in our time, almost the first thing the commander of a foreign army does, on entering an enemy's town, is to convene the magistrates, and make requisitions upon them for bread, meat, wine, forage, and such other supplies as are wanted. And this, too, under threat of military execution. And the process has been found effectual, and the practice universal.

But it is said, Mr. President, that the Mexicans will fight till the last extremity. It may be so. There are many desperate deeds recorded in history, and obstinacy is a prominent trait in the Spanish character, and belongs to all the affiliated people of that stock. But men do not fight for the mere purpose of being killed. We do not enter Mexico to conquer her—*only to conquer a peace.* We do not assail her independence. We do not seek her permanent subjugation. We only ask her to do us justice. It seems to me, then, that this is not one of those cases, sometimes prominent in the history of nations, where the public energy is aroused to a fit of desperation, and by which means victories are achieved against all previous calculations. Without government, without trade, without resources, sowing, but not to reap, or reaping but not to enjoy, and with all the evils of hostile occupation, I cannot but think, that the Mexican people may be conquered—to justice.

Mr. President, the Senator from South Carolina has adverted to the periodical visits of fever, by which the lowlands of Mexico are, during that season, impervious to the stranger. It is a tax, which those rich countries pay for other bounties, that nature has given them. But this is a reason for hastening, and not for abandoning our operations. Certainly, I trust, our Government will

not expose the lives of our brave soldiers in those death-doing climates. Our armies can fight with their natural enemies, and they have poured out their blood like water for their country. But they cannot fight the pestilence, and their weapons would be powerless before the angel of death. Wherever, therefore, they may be, when this time of disease comes on, they will no doubt be stopped and properly taken care of, in districts removed from its operation. This is the paramount duty of the Government, and they must fulfil it under the heaviest responsibility. So much, sir, for the future. Now let me be permitted to review the past.

During a considerable portion of last session of Congress, we were occupied in the consideration of the thesis, that nations cannot go to war in this enlightened age of the world. How we should have decided that difficult question, had a decision become necessary, I do not venture to assert. Our deliberations were suddenly interrupted by the sound of hostile cannon from India, from Australia, from the Cape of Good Hope, from Algiers, from the Caucasus, and from the La Plata, and still nearer and louder from our own frontier, which announced, that old-fashioned war, with all its evils, still found abiding places upon the earth, and that we were yet far from the age of universal peace and benevolence. The disinterested English journals read us many a homily upon our pugnacious propensities; and some of the continental papers of Europe, expressed their holy horror at the assurance of that great, unbridled, trans-Atlantic democracy, in thinking it had honor and interests to assert, and courage to defend them.

The progress of the war, in which we find ourselves engaged, has furnished to the English and French journals, since that period, favorable opportunities of impugning our motives and our policy, and of arraigning us at the tribunal of public opinion through the world; in contrast, it is to be presumed, with the disinterested and philanthropic conduct of their own governments. I desire, before I examine the internal questions, connected with this war, to submit a few remarks upon the external ones. The conduct of nations constitutes the law of nations. If the enlightened and powerful governments of the world take redress into their own hands, whenever their interests require, they have little right to arraign the course of other powers, who, after long years of patient forbearance, find themselves driven to arms. A few brief statements of this self-redressing policy, if I may call them such, will exhibit the modern practice in bold relief.

In 1829, difficulties arose between the Argentine republic and the French, respecting the service of foreigners in the militia of the country. The diplomatic agent of France immediately withdrew, while the French fleet attacked the vessels of Buenos Ayres, which then submitted to the demands imposed upon it.

England abandoned the Falkland Islands in 1774, after holding them a few years. On the assertion of the independence of Buenos Ayres, that Government took possession of these islands, as the successor of the rights of Spain. In 1833, after having been the subject of a diplomatic correspondence between England and Buenos Ayres, while peaceably held by the latter Power, a British vessel of war took possession of them, and its captain addressed to the Buenos Ayrean commander this modest and laconic note: "It is my intention to 'hoist, to-morrow morning, the national flag of 'Great Britain on shore, when, I request you will 'be pleased to haul down your flag, and to with-'draw your forces, taking with you all the stores, '&c., belonging to your Government."

In 1831 a difficulty arose between the British and the Portuguese Governments, in consequence of the claims of certain British subjects. England demanded—

1st. That a Portuguese captain should be cashiered.

2d. That certain payments should be made within a month.

3d. That several magistrates should be removed.

4th. That regular judicial proceedings should be disavowed, and compensation made for injuries, they were said to have inflicted.

5th. Another disavowal of the proceedings of a magistrate.

And in all these cases of dismissal, it was required, that they should be notified in the Lisbon Gazette, with a statement of the causes, which occasioned them, and an assurance, that none of these persons should again be employed under any pretence.

6th. That certain duties on British manufactures should cease.

7th. That compensation should be made to an Englishman, who had been ordered back into Spain, in consequence of some irregularity in his passport.

8th. A severe and public reprimand of a Portuguese officer, who had given offence.

9th. The dismissal of a judge, conservator of the British privileges.

10th. A positive engagement, that the rights of British subjects should thenceforth be strictly observed.

And to all these demands it was added, that none of them admitted of the slightest negotiation or modification.

This ultimatum was carried out by a British squadron, which cruised off the mouth of the Tagus, while the Portuguese ministry were deliberating on their reply.

The nature of that reply was determined by the notice, with which the British consul-general concluded his demands, that in the event of their being rejected, the British fleet would commence hostilities. Before the time elapsed every demand was complied with; and the Lisbon Gazette, on the 2d of May, announced the humiliation of the Portuguese Government.

"This example," says the British Annual Register, with much *naïveté*, while narrating the transaction, "was not lost upon France." A French citizen had been punished for "committing a breach of public decency in the Cathedral during passion week;" and another Frenchman was accused and punished for having been engaged in a conspiracy. "Other subjects of France had been arrested at 'Oporto and Lisbon, but had suffered no other 'indignity, but their confinement." These meas-

ures appear to have been directed by the ordinary judicial tribunals. The French Government demanded redress, which not being granted, a French fleet sailed for the Tagus, and began reprisals on the Portuguese flag. This measure, being found insufficient to produce the desired result, a stronger fleet was despatched, with an ultimatum, and this not being accepted, it entered the river and anchored off Lisbon. The Portuguese Government then submitted. But immediately after, additional demands were made, and the Portuguese fleet was conveyed to Brest.

Certain commercial advantages were granted to Great Britain by Naples in a treaty concluded in 1816. In 1838, a monopoly of the sulphur mines was granted by the Neapolitan Government to a company, organized for the purpose of working them. England considered this grant an infraction of the treaty, and remonstrated against it. After some diplomatic discussions, the Neapolitan Government announced to that of England, that it had determined not to yield to the demands, not considering the monopoly, as any infraction of the treaty. The parties interested in it took the opinion of two of the most eminent counsel in England, Sir F. Pollock and Dr. Phillimore, who decided that it was no infraction of the treaty of 1816. But the British Government determined to enforce its demands, and ordered its admiral on the Mediterranean station to hold himself in readiness to commence hostilities against the Neapolitan flag. They were actually commenced in 1840 by a British fleet, which captured a number of Neapolitan vessels. The Government of Naples at first prepared to resist; but, says an English historian, "the 'utter hopelessness of a contest with England in-'duced it finally to accept the proposed mediation 'of France." The result was the abolition of the sulphur monopoly.

The French took possession of Vera Cruz in 1839, after a heavy bombardment, and held it as a security for the redress of their grievances. These grievances consisted principally, if not wholly, in withholding from French citizens the right of retail trade. An indemnity of three millions of francs was granted, and also some compensation for French citizens, who had been expelled from the country.

The British Annual Register observes that "the 'peculiar indemnity, which the French claimed, 'arose out of all sorts of demands on the part 'of certain Frenchmen, who alleged they had 'grounds of complaint against the Mexicans. But 'in addition to the compensation demanded, the 'French insisted on concessions and privileges, 'which no independent nation could be expected 'to grant, and no generous one should have en-'deavored to extort from a weaker Power. They 'required, that judges should be removed, sentences 'revoked; and that immunities, not granted to the 'most favored nation, should be conceded to French 'residents; such as exemption from war contribu-'tions and extraordinary imposts, together with 'unrestricted liberty to carry on a retail trade."

The seizure of the Sandwich Islands, in 1842, by the French Admiral Du Petit Thouars, is fresh in the recollection of every one, who watches the progress of the political affairs of the world. Whatever was the character of the French claims, the act of hostility, by which redress was sought, was a stroke inflicted by a great Power upon a feeble one, which neither the nature of the alleged offence, nor the time, that had elapsed could justify.

I need not recall in detail the transactions of the La Plata, by which the English and French Governments interfered in the war between Buenos Ayres and Montevideo. The universal judgment of this country has pronounced that transaction, one of the most unjustifiable assaults, ever committed upon the independence of nations. It was mercantile cupidity, and neither justice nor philanthropy, which led to this gross outrage.

But why, sir, do I turn from the direct issue before us, to recall these instances of self-redress, which have, within the few last years, attracted the attention of Christendom? I agree with the honorable Senator from Georgia in much that he has said on the subject of war, always injurious and often unjust. But I am not going to be led into a polemic upon that subject. We must take the world as we find it; and the nation, that hesitates to defend its honor and its interests, will soon have neither to defend. There is an Arab proverb, which says, it is the last feather, which breaks the camel's back. There is a last indignity, which, unredressed, breaks down the honor and character of any nation. Whether we had reached the point, where forbearance becomes pusillanimity, in our intercourse with Mexico, can best be judged by passing in review the long catalogue of outrages on her side, and of acts of moderation on ours.

The Divine Lawgiver has said, Judge not, lest ye be judged. And what judgment has been meted out by the public opinion of England upon the conduct of this country in our intercourse with the Mexican republic? One short, but emphatic extract from each of the great journals of England, the exponents of the rival parties in that country, will put this question beyond controversy. They were brought out by the last steam-packet.

"Texas," says the London Times, "has spoiled 'the *morale* of the United States. The invaders of 'Mexico are men of blood. They are not the men 'to build the temple of peace."

And the London Morning Chronicle, speaking of that part of the President's message, which recounts the causes of the war, says: "It seems a 'monstrous thing, that mouth of man should run 'on so; that it should parade hypocrisy in the day-'light; that it should insult the understanding of 'the world." "To what end make statements that 'will deceive no one, and which will so much 'credit for the future?"

If ever there was one illustration, stronger than another, of the propensity of man to *behold the mote in a brother's eye, and not to consider the beam in his own*, it is found in these ever-renewing and ever-condemning judgments, formed in England upon the policy of the United States, both external and internal. Like the Pharisee of old, the English people thank God, they *are not as other nations are*, "or even as" that great mobocracy upon the western hemisphere, so hateful in the eyes of every true believer in the divine right of the few to govern the many.

They thank God that they do not go to war. It is antiquated—it is a barbarous usage, unfit for Christian people. Even an honorable Senator from New Jersey recapitulated the wrongs we had submitted to from other Powers, enumerating them with mathematical precision—the Saxon, the Gaul, the Dane, and almost all others, whose names are found in the nomenclature of nations, and thence seemed to deduce the conclusion, that as we had suffered much, we might well suffer more. I will not undertake to say, Mr. President, that we have not pushed our forbearance beyond the true limit of public honor and dignity; but I will say to that honorable Senator, that our cup was running over when Mexico attacked us, and that the future would have been as full of danger and uncertainty, as the past was of indignity, had we sat down and worked out our course by the rule of three? As so many injuries from Denmark gave such a measure of immunity, what measure shall the injustice of Mexico give?

I feel little disposition, sir, to pore over the histories of France or England, and, placing my finger upon the acts of injustice recorded there, to compare these with our own policy, in our intercourse with foreign nations. We never acquired a foot of territory by blood. If they dare to say as much, let them say it. "Texas," says the Times, "has spoiled the *morale* of the United States." Is there any *morale* left in England? If there is, it has survived the shocks of such acquisitions, as the world has never seen, since the fall of the Roman empire. We are men of blood, because we resist the invasion of the Mexicans! And what, then, are the men of England, who have left the mark of blood upon the soil of almost every nation on the habitable globe? The American mouth utters hypocrisy! But there is no hypocrisy in high places, where forbearance, and moderation, and philanthropy are eternally preached, and conquest, and acquisition, and commercial cupidity, eternally practised. We have seen one kingdom overturned, and its dominion pass to a foreign Power, because its semi-barbarous sovereign forgot his own dignity and the rights of others, so much as to flourish his fan in the face of a consul. And we have seen the oldest empire in the world attacked, and its recesses, so long concealed, laid open, and its government prostrated at the feet of an invader, because it insisted upon the exercise of its indisputable right to prohibit the smuggling of opium—a drug equally destructive to the physical powers, and to the moral faculties. But, sir, I have no disposition to open a ledger with other nations, and to make regular entries of their acts of injustice and aggression, and to compare the account with our own. We claim no exemption from the frailties of humanity. It were well if war could be banished, and peace forever established among the nations of the world. That time will come; but it will come, when it is ordained in the providence of God. The eye of faith may discern it now. But, looking at things as they are, and applying to them the ordinary rules of human judgment, the reign of universal peace is still far remote. And, in the mean time, if we are struck, we must strike back, or become a by-word and a reproach among the nations of the earth.

But, sir, passing from the external view of our difficulties with Mexico, we have still an internal one to take, which involves much higher considerations. The causes of the war are a grave subject of discussion. Public opinion is investigating and pronouncing its judgment upon them. For myself, I have no fear of the result. The more the question is examined, the more manifest will be our wrongs, and the clearer our forbearance. In the President's last annual message, an interesting synopsis was given of the conduct of Mexico towards this country. No more conclusive review of national injuries has ever appealed to the public opinion of this country, or of the world. It recapitulates, calmly, and with truth and force, the still accumulating wrongs, we had suffered, and the final act, which crowned them—the invasion of our country and the attack upon our army; an attack, which the Mexican authorities declared they would make, as far east as the Sabine river.

I shall not, Mr. President, go over the whole ground of our difficulties with Mexico. I regret, that it becomes necessary to investigate their history in this place. I regret, that unanimity does not prevail upon this subject, when unanimity is so essential to prompt and vigorous action. While I regret it, however, I impugn the motives of no one. Thank God, we are as free to investigate the conduct of the Government, as we are to breathe the air of heaven. But while I concede to others the same right I claim for myself—the right to examine freely, and to judge openly, the conduct of the Government in its intercourse with other nations—I may be allowed to express the regret, and together with the regret, the surprise, that throughout the country one undivided sentiment had not prevailed—that the conduct of Mexico left us no choice between war and dishonor.

We were the first to receive that republic into the family of nations. Our complaints against her commenced almost with the commencement of her independence. They go back to the year 1817, and come down to the present day, in one almost uninterrupted series of outrages. I shall not state them *seriatim*, nor enter into the detail of their nature and extent. This has been repeatedly done, and the official documents are before the country. I will merely classify from an able report, made by Mr. Forsyth in 1837, the various heads of complaints, which will present the general aspect of the subject:

1. Treasure belonging to citizens of the United States has been seized by Mexican officers in its transit from the capital to the coast.

2. Vessels of the United States have been captured, detained, and condemned, upon the most frivolous pretexts.

3. Duties have been exacted from others notoriously against law, or without law.

4. Other vessels have been employed, and, in some instances ruined in the Mexican service, without compensation to the owners.

5. Citizens of the United States have been imprisoned for long periods of time, without being informed of the offences with which they were charged.

6. Other citizens have been murdered and robbed by Mexican officers on the high seas, without any attempt to bring the guilty to justice.

In presenting to Congress these causes of complaint against Mexico in 1837, General Jackson stated that they "would justify, in the eyes of all nations, immediate war." This sentiment was responded to by the Committees on Foreign Relations, both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives; the former of whom looked to a presentation of the subject at the next session of Congress, and could not doubt, but that such measures would be immediately adopted, as might be necessary to vindicate the honor of the country, and insure ample reparation to our injured citizens. And the latter said they "fully concur with the 'President, that ample cause exists for taking re-'dress into our own hands, and believe, that we 'shall be justified in the opinion of other nations 'for taking such a step." President Van Buren, in December, 1837, in his message to Congress, said that "though our causes of complaint, and 'some of the most offensive character, admitted of 'an immediate and satisfactory reply, yet it was 'only within a few days that any answer had been 'received, and that no satisfaction had been given 'or offered for one of our public complaints, and 'that only one case of personal wrong had been 'favorably considered, and that but four cases, 'out of all, had been decided by the Mexican 'Government." President Van Buren distinctly told Congress, that redress was beyond the reach of the Executive, and could only be obtained by the action of Congress, which action must, of course, have been war.

As to the conventions, which have since been made by the two countries, and violated by Mexico, I need not enter into their history: they are fresh in the recollection of all. These three conventions, by the infidelity of the Mexican Government, have proved nearly fruitless; and after thirty years of injury on the one side, and of remonstrance on the other, there is nothing left for us, but to abandon all hope of redress, or to obtain it by a vigorous prosecution of the war. Is there another government on the face of the earth which would have been thus patient, not to say humble, during the long progress of such aggressions? And it is now too late to tell us, that we have hastily and unnecessarily commenced war, when the war was commenced by the enemy, and when, if we had struck the first stroke, we should have been justified in the eyes of the world, and of posterity. But it may be said, and it has been said, that although sufficient causes of war existed on our part, still it was not these causes, which provoked immediate hostilities. This view, if true, has relation to the expediency, and not to the justice of the war. But what are the general facts, upon which a just conclusion can be formed? After the convention of Texas had decided, that that republic would annex herself to the United States, agreeably to the terms held out in the act of Congress, but before its consummation by a vote of the Texan people, we were under a strong moral obligation to protect her from any foreign invasion, and more particularly from any invasion, to which she might be exposed by the manifestations of her intentions to attach herself to the United States. I shall not argue this point. No illustration can make it stronger. As soon, therefore, as the incipient steps had been taken, our troops entered Texas, by the invitation of the proper authorities, and on the 15th day of August, 1845, they had taken a position at Corpus Christi, west of the Nueces, and remained there till the 17th of March, 1846, when they marched for the Rio Grande. So much for our military movements.

Two causes are alleged, as giving Mexico just cause of war against the United States. The first, which is the annexation of Texas, is jointly urged both in Mexico and in this country. The second, which I believe finds its advocates only in the United States, is that our army occupied the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande.

As to the first, it has passed the ordeal of public opinion, and received its final judgment. I do not flatter myself, that I could present any new views of a subject, so long and so publicly discussed. But, as it stands in my way, and I cannot avoid it, I shall venture to submit a few reflections, which have occurred to me.

The right of a country to reduce to obedience a portion of its territory, asserting independence by arms, is not denied. The recognised principles of the law of nations require other powers to afford no aid to either party, during the actual progress of the controversy. They may acknowledge, however, and in fact they often do acknowledge, the independence of the insurrectionary province, without giving to the Government, claiming its allegiance, any just cause of offence. They did so to Mexico during the progress of her revolutionary war with Spain, and they did so to Texas, while a similar relation existed between her and Mexico. But there is a limit to this right. Such a war cannot last forever, and two nations cannot forever be kept in this peculiar attitude, involving delicate questions, that may at any time disturb the peace of the world. When Greece declared her independence of Turkey, the Porte waged a war of many years to reduce her to subjection. The principal powers of Europe, believing that a reasonable opportunity had been afforded to the Turkish Government to reëstablish its supremacy, and in which effort it had failed, determined, that an end should be put to the operations. They therefore interfered, and announced to the Sultan, that the time had come when Greece must be independent. And this declaration was maintained by force, and at Navarino, to use a vilified, but very proper expression, they conquered a peace. This is perhaps a strong case, for this interference took place *flagrante bello*, while a Turkish army was yet engaged in operations to put down the spirit of freedom in Greece. As a general principle, it may be asumed, that while both parties are waging open war, to assert their superiority, other nations should look on and peacefully bide the issue. But when the contest is actually abandoned, and the invading party withdraws from the disputed territory, and relinquishes all military operations, the struggle is over. Independence is established, and whatever may be the nominal relations of the two countries, they are henceforth in the same attitude—equal powers among the nations of the earth. The war is in effect over, and its rights should pass away with itself. This is the true view of the subject; and applying these

principles to the then existing relations, between Mexico and Texas, we shall find that the latter power was as free from Mexico, as we are from England. No effort had been made by the Mexican Government for ten years to reduce her revolted province to subjection. Not a hostile foot had trodden the Texan soil. A chief magistrate, and at the same time, commander-in-chief, captured; an army destroyed; and all invaders repelled, were the fruits of her last exertion. They crowned at once her patriotism, and sealed her fate. She was thenceforth independent. And no more decisive evidence of this result can be furnished, than the very conduct of Mexico herself. What did she do, probably under other promptings, when it was ascertained, that Texas desired admission into our Confederacy? She offered to acknowledge her independence, if she would pledge herself not to join the American Union. A jealous and an unworthy proposal, which the one had no right to make, and which the other indignantly rejected. A proposal, which was, in fact, the very recognition offered. It acknowledged the strength of Texas, and the weakness of Mexico, and that further efforts at subjugation were hopeless. For myself, I have always considered that act of the Mexican Government, as an abandonment of the controversy, and an admission, that Texas was independent of her, and beyond her power.

But as reasonable men, looking at things as they are, what injury have we inflicted upon Mexico, under any just view, that can be taken of her relations with Texas? What has she lost by our interference? Her own claim may be summed up in this, that she had a contingent right to reduce Texas to submission. And what was that right worth? Where is the man in Texas, in Mexico, even in Christendom, who believes there was a bare possibility, that the Texan people could ever be replaced in their primitive condition by the power of the Mexican Government? The thing was impossible. Its time had gone by. Events had rolled over and crushed all hopes of recovery. Of what, then, does Mexico complain? Certainly of no pecuniary injury, for none has been inflicted. If annexation has had any effect, in this point of view, that effect has been beneficial; for it has saved to the Mexican people an immense and useless expenditure of blood and treasure. Is there any point of honor involved? I can discern none. For the principal fact that Mexico was powerless, was felt and acknowledged by all the world. I know what may be said upon this subject, sir. Rights may be pushed to their extremes; principles to their utmost bearing And as Mexico had an absolute right, we should have left it to her. I do not deal with such questions, nor with their consequences. I take the public affairs of this world, as they are, judging them by the rules of common sense, and pronouncing them just or unjust, as they come up to, or recede from, that universal standard.

But, sir, there is one consideration, which renders it proper we should still keep in view the previous wrongs, which Mexico had inflicted upon us. Her conduct, in the long progress of these outrages, had established her character. Redress was impossible. Thirty years were, with her, as one day, and one day as thirty years; for, at the end of that period, we were about where we began, so far as respects satisfaction, while our causes of complaint had gone on accumulating, almost in an inverse proportion, to the lapse of time. We had found, by experience, there could be no amicable and satisfactory adjustment of our difficulties with Mexico. We had learned—and learned to our sorrow—that what we got we had to take with the strong hand. What greater probability was there, that we should adjust the question of unsettled boundaries, after her hostile and peremptory declaration, than that we should adjust our causes of complaint, many of which she admitted, and scarcely any of which she denied? We claim Texas to the Rio Grande. I will not stop to examine the grounds of that claim. This has been explained and defended by others, more competent to the task than I am. In this Senate the strongest position I have heard taken in opposition to the extent of this claim, is, that much may be said on both sides. Well, then, we had a reasonable claim. I say, an undoubted one, and we took the assertion of it into our own hands. And, the jeremiads of the London journals to the contrary notwithstanding, I do not believe there is a government in Christendom, if it felt itself able, which, under similar circumstances, would not have done as we did. The past had marked out the future. The indication was unerring. And we judged for ourselves, and acted for ourselves, as we had a right to do, after Mexico, for the third part of a century, had shown a dogged determination to refuse us justice.

But, sir, had we taken the initiative, and commenced war immediately, we should have been justified from other considerations. When the act for annexation passed, the Mexican Minister in this country immediately protested against that measure; and, in fact, declared it to be just cause of war. And this view was more authoritatively announced by the supreme Government of Mexico, March 12, 1846, which declared, in a note to Mr. Slidell, that it looked "upon annexation as a '*casus belli;* and as a consequence of this declara-' tion, negotiation was by its very nature at an end, 'and war was the only recourse of the Mexican 'Government." But before this last and decisive act, the Government of Mexico had given many indications of its determination to resist, by force, the annexation of Texas; and particularly those announced in the communications from our Consul, and from our Minister in Mexico, and in the letter of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs of December 20, 1845. In this last document, that functionary says that "the questions which have dis-' turbed the harmony between the two countries, 'will bring on a war between them, unless such 'settlement be effected in a satisfactory manner,' &c. What settlement the Mexican Government demanded, and for want of which it is said a *casus belli* had occurred, was a change in our relations with Texas; leaving to Mexico the assertion of her assumed rights over it. In short, sir, from the first moment it appeared probable, that Texas would be admitted into our Confederacy, to our latest diplomatic communication with her Government, Mexico has told us and the world, that annexation

would be, and is war; and she went on preparing to add deeds to declarations, by the concentration of her forces, so as to be ready to take the "initiative" in hostilities against us, to borrow the expression of General Parcdes in his orders to the Mexican commanding general. I need not recapitulate the series of facts, which announced and confirmed her purposes. They have passed into history, and are known to us all. The Texas of Mexico was Texas to the Sabine, with no intermediate boundary, to which we might go with impunity, and make the country our own. That river was a Rubicon, and it became us to pause and ponder on its banks, before we crossed its stream, and carried our standard to the country beyond. In all the communications of the Mexican Government, no distinction is made between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. And the occupation, by our forces, of the country between these rivers, which took place in August, 1845, was never presented as an exclusive cause of complaint, nor, indeed, noticed in any manner whatever. It was the annexation and occupation of Texas, and not of any particular portion of Texas, which led to the reclamations, and finally to the hostilities of Mexico. It was a question of title, and not of boundary. A claim of right, which went for the whole, and would never be satisfied with the relinquishment of a part. And, sir, the warning and threatenings of Mexico were no vain boastings. She said what she would do, and she did as she said. At the commencement of April, 1846, and before it could have been known in Mexico, that General Taylor had advanced to the Rio Grande, the President of that republic directed its general upon the frontier to "attack" our army "by every means, which war permits." It was not till after this, and in fact till after our occupation of the country west of the Nueces, for upwards of eight months, without a single allusion to that river, that it first makes its appearance in a Mexican communication. And it is then found in a letter from Ampudia to General Taylor, who is required to break up his camp within twenty-four hours, and to withdraw to the eastern side of the Nueces. Such a demand, under such circumstances, admitted but one answer, and it got it, and that answer was No. And General Taylor was as speedy as he was brief; for the same day gave birth to the demand, and to the refusal. It surely cannot be necessary to enter into the decisive considerations, going to show that such a retrograde movement was then impossible. We had taken up a position peaceably within our own territory, as we claimed it, and with no intimation from our opponent, that that position was any more an infraction of his rights, than would have been the occupation of the western bank of the Sabine. I repeat, that during eight months, we had been west of the Nueces, without one word of complaint for having passed that river.

Now, sir, let us do justice to ourselves. It is possible, with the best motives, to possess so much general philanthropy, as to overlook our own rights, while we regard the rights of others. It is quite possible, that the divisions of opinion in our country, and the views of this controversy, which have accompanied its discussion, may have furnished to the Mexican Government a motive for requiring our army to retire to the east of the Nueces. For certain it is, that this limit is an American and not a Mexican suggestion. But however this may have been, it came too late. To withdraw, when required to do so by the Mexican general, accompanied with the threat of immediate hostilities, should the proposition be declined, and fixing the period of twenty-four hours as the term for its consideration, would have tarnished the honor of our arms, and disgraced us in the eyes of the world. When an American general stops even to consider such an ultimatum, he is no longer fit to lead his countrymen to battle.

But I repeat, sir, let us do justice to ourselves. Let us apply to our own Government the same principles of action, which regulate the other Powers of the earth. What would England or France have done, under similar circumstances? We have seen what they did in other cases, and we know what they would have done in this. A reasonable forecast would have given them a right to take the "initiative." Whether they would do that, or only make preparations to repel the threatened attack, by collecting their land and sea forces, and by placing these in the best positions for immediate service, upon the maritime and inland frontiers of their opponent, would have been a mere question of prudential calculation, depending on the peculiar circumstances of the case. To do either would have been their unquestioned right, and one or the other they would have done, as all their history tells us. Well, sir, we made these preparations, and took these positions, as every dictate of honor and prudence required us to do. Mexico said she would attack us, if a certain contingency happened. That contingency did happen, and she attacked us. We took the *defensive*, and she the "*initiative*." Let us not then be told, sir, that the passage of the Nueces brought on this war. Its proximate cause was annexation, proclaimed before and since by Mexico to us, and to the world. Had we no shadow of title to the country extending to the Rio Grande, the movement of our forces to that river would have been justified by the sternest dictates of self-defence. The attack being inevitable, it was for us to choose, where to receive it—either within our own frontier, or within that of our opponent. Such is the law of nations, and such the practice of nations.

But, sir, passing from the causes to the conduct of the war, another broad field of controversy has been opened to us. We are attacked along our whole line. The reasons, the measures, the motives, the objects of the Administration are equally called into question. I do not flatter myself, that any views I can present, will influence the final judgment, which the Senate and the country must pronounce on this great controversy; still, I have formed an opinion for myself, and desire briefly to state the considerations, on which it is founded.

In order justly to appreciate the probable results of this war, it is necessary to look back upon the condition of the country, at its commencement. What was that commencement? A sudden attack precipitated a Mexican army upon a detachment of American troops. Twice were the assailants repulsed, and twice was the honor of our arms maintained, and two brilliant victories were gained under circumstances, which no American can recall,

without emotions of pride and patriotism. We had made but inadequate preparations for such an aggression. Its scene was almost two thousand miles from the seat of government. Our whole army, of which only a portion was on that frontier, did not exceed seven thousand men, scattered along the coast and interior boundary of this vast republic. And what spectacle was exhibited when the news of this aggression broke upon the public ear? The citizens of Greece and Rome, in the brightest days of those republics, never brought to the altar of their country better or prouder sacrifices. There was one universal burst of patriotic devotion. More than three hundred thousand men enrolled themselves, and asked to be permitted to march to the battle-field, and, if necessary, to die for their country. I have seen the conscription in Europe, by which armies are kept up, and freedom is kept down; and I have attended the drawing, to ascertain the circumstances accompanying it. And a melancholy exhibition it is of power on one side, and of repugnance on the other. The young men are collected at the place assigned for this lottery of life. Their numbers are drawn in succession, and they await the result with almost fearful anxiety; as a great calamity is always awaited by those on whom it may fall, and who are yet ignorant where it will strike, and where it will spare. And the exultation of those, who escape, and the depression of those, who do not, are strikingly displayed, not only by the parties themselves, but by their immediate connexions, who accompany them, and await the result with an apprehension, scarcely inferior to their own.

But here, sir, there was none of the machinery, by which unwilling citizens are made conscripts, and conscripts are made unwilling soldiers. As I remarked on a former occasion, at the first tap of the drum, at the first sound of the bugle, the country rose in arms—the artisan left his tools where he had used them—the farmer his plough in the furrow—the employments of life were abandoned—and a spectacle passed before our eyes, unseen in modern times. It has been computed, that almost half a million of men appealed to their Government for the privilege of participating in the vindication of its honor, and in the defence of their country.

Should this war terminate to-morrow without indemnity, either pecuniary or territorial—and I trust it will not—I should still consider its results richly worth all they have cost. I regret the expenditure of money it has occasioned, and I deplore the loss of life—of much precious life—which has been so freely poured out in its prosecution. But that treasure has been well spent, and that life nobly sacrificed. We were not truly known to the nations of the world. Our industry, indeed, our enterprise, our spirit of maritime adventure, had proclaimed themselves in the most distant regions, wherever the seas were whitened by our canvass, or ploughed by our keels—and that wherever was everywhere. But we had been at peace for a considerable portion of a century; our deeds of military prowess had been forgotten; our capacity, either to defend ourselves or to assert our rights and honor by arms, was almost unknown; and where regarded at all, was regarded as feeble in itself, and as feebly exerted. But this delusion has passed away; it has been dispelled by the three victories, gained over vastly superior numbers, and accompanied with circumstances of gallantry and military skill, which will ever make them memorable at home, and acknowledged proofs of American prowess abroad. We are redeemed. We take our station among the nations of the earth, willing to do right, and able to command it. Henceforth, during this generation, at least, wherever our banner is borne, by land or by sea, it will be pointed to, as the national emblem of a people, who have done those deeds, which give character now, and security hereafter.

But, sir, to return to the condition of our troops at the commencement of the war. The force, from the circumstances I have stated, was collected in the shortest possible time, and put hastily in march for the scene of operations. Far the greatest portion of this force was undisciplined, and without military experience. Brave, indeed, as ever marched to a battle-field, but without any practical knowledge of a military life, so essential to form an efficient soldier. And in all our investigations into the conduct and history of this war, there is one important consideration we must keep steadily in view: our military establishment, from the very nature of our position and institutions, is the most expensive in the world. Human life is worth more here, than in Europe. Men live more comfortably, and are better provided for. Their present is richer in performance, and their future in promise. A French soldier receives one sous, not equal to one cent, a day. I do not speak with absolute certainty, for I have not had time to refresh my recollection by looking into the details of this subject. It may be that one centime a day—the tenth part of a cent—has come to increase this compensation. For that proposition certainly occupied the attention of the French Chambers a few years since. What do you think, Mr. President, of $3 65, as the annual pay of a French soldier, amounting to $29 30 for eight years' service, in the best part of his life? for that is the term during which every French soldier is compelled to serve. What do you think of a quarter of a pound of lean beef, and from a pound to a pound and a half of brown—almost black—bread, for the daily subsistence of men, called by the heaviest penalties to maintain the honor of their country abroad, and the power of their Government at home? As with the pay, so is it with the subsistence. I do not undertake to speak with absolute precision; but I know I am not far wrong. I am quite near enough for the object I have in view, that of showing the difference between the condition of a French and of an American soldier, and the difference of expense, which that brings with it. The army of France is a great political engine, connected with the internal, as well as with the external affairs of the country. It was a subject, that could not fail to attract my attention while there. It is admirably composed and admirably administered, for the purposes of the Government. The soldiers are active, brave, with a true military bearing, and with a passionate devotion to the glory of France. I found their subsistence, and all their supplies, upon the lowest possible scale of economy, consistent with

the preservation of their health and strength. I found, too, that when first called into military life, the provisions dealt out to them were inadequate to their comfortable support. And it was only when they had acquired the habits of their new occupation, and had learned how best to manage their provisions, and to content themselves with meagre soup and dry bread, they were able to accommodate themselves to their new position.

As to us, we are not fit to be a nation of soldiers. We have much better things to do. And the resources of an empire would break down under the expenses, which a large and a long-continued military establishment would necessarily entail upon us. Whatever may be the extent of our army—and we all agree that in time of peace it should be small—and whether large or small, it must be filled by volunteer engagements. And public opinion will require, and rightly require, that the men composing it should be adequately paid, properly clothed, and comfortably maintained.

It must also be recollected, that the means of transportation, one of the limbs of an army, had to be suddenly collected within the United States, and carried to the theatre of operations. These means were necessarily large, and could only be brought together at great expense and labor, and with much loss of time. Recollect, also, sir, that the organization of your Quartermaster's Department was not made for the present state of things. It was not at all adequate to the discharge of a mass of new duties, suddenly thrown upon it. I know the head of that department well. A more gallant soldier, a more faithful officer, a more vigilant administrator, our service does not number upon the military Register. And I believe the assistants under him deserve commendation for their zeal, capacity, and industry. But new agents, without experience, had to be selected, and it were vain to expect purchases would be as judiciously and economically made, and property as well preserved, applied, and accounted for, in this new exigency, as in the ordinary routine of service.

Besides, sir, there is one very obvious consideration we must keep in view, in looking at our expenditures. It applies to no party, but belongs to all, for its cause is to be sought in our institutions. The accumulation of supplies for our military operations is greater, and always has been greater, than in any other army in the world. The responsibility of those, who direct them is so heavy and immediate, from the ever-vigilant supervision of public opinion, that it is felt in all their arrangements. Fearing to do too little, they come to do too much, and thence loss in purchases and ultimate waste in application. It was something like this which aided to swell the expense of two small Indian wars and one *quasi* war to thirty millions of dollars. And we have an illustration of its operation in an able letter of the 5th of December last, to the Secretary of War, from General Jesup, who, in defending his department from the charge of General Taylor, that his means of transportation were insufficient and not in time, while speaking of the boats ordered, says that "the number required by the General was, I believe, nearly quadrupled ultimately by the officers of the department." And again: "It was known that he (General Taylor) had a wagon train amply sufficient for double the force he commanded, before the arrival of the volunteers;" that is to say, for the force he was expected to operate with when the supply was furnished. Why this piling of Pelion upon Ossa? Why this doubling and quadrupling of materials? It seems to be one of the taxes we cannot escape, and therefore we must submit to it with the best grace we may; though it is to be remarked, that no injury happened to the public service in this case, for the excess, if not wanted when procured, was finally found useful and actually insufficient.

But, sir, there were other difficulties beyond these, which presented themselves to the Government. We were comparatively ignorant of the true state of the country we were about to enter. We had almost no knowledge of its interior, its roads, its passes, its natural or artificial supplies of water, its means of transportation and subsistence, the condition of its fortresses, and of many other important facts, topographical and statistical, connected with the movements of an invading army. Where we should first strike, and how we should do it, were difficult and delicate subjects of inquiry. There is, in every country, a line of operations, along which a hostile army may most easily move, and where its movements will produce the greatest effect upon the people, who are invaded, and upon their Government. It may be, that a strong fortress should be the object of attack; or the commercial metropolis, the principal place of trade and population; or the political capital, the seat of Government, and the central point of influence and authority. Now, in Europe, all these facts are well known. Contiguity of position, continued intercommunication, and ever-renewing wars, have revealed the internal condition of the countries in that quarter of the globe. Each knows its strong and weak points, and these are equally known to other Powers. Extensive topographical bureaus make part of the military organization of all the larger States of Europe. No reasonable expense is spared to collect and deposite in them all the information which future exigencies may render necessary. Lines of communication, the direction and condition of roads, the crossing of streams, the passage of mountains, the state of the fortresses, whether isolated or making part of the defences of a city, the means of transportation, the extent of supplies, all these objects, so essential to an army in the progress of its operations, are examined and studied; and the result is ready, whenever the time for action arrives. And, besides this, experience has shown the most vulnerable points; where the severest blow can be inflicted, and where the moral effect of military disasters will be most sensibly felt, and most likely to render a campaign decisive. It was information like this, spread before him, which enabled Carnot, in his cabinet at Paris, to mark out, with almost mathematical precision, the operations of the French armies, and to direct plans of invasion, in which the genius of the great generals of that day, in combination and execution, was brought into admirable coöperation with the genius of the minister, who had matured and prescribed them.

There was a lamentable deficiency in our coun-

try of all this kind of knowledge, respecting the condition of Mexico, at the time she attacked our forces upon the Rio Grande; and the Government was suddenly called upon to direct the operations of a campaign in a region, which was almost a *terra incognita*.

So much for the difficulties. Now for the results. Let me remark, in the first instance, sir, that not a movement, as I understand, relating to operations on the northeast frontier of Mexico has been directed from the seat of Government, which has not met the approbation of the distinguished officer, who has connected his own name with the history of his country by his victories in the valley of the Rio Grande. So much is due to himself and the Administration. His own movements he was free to direct and control. Immediately after the declaration of war, he was requested to communicate to the Government his views as to what should be the future operations on the Rio Grande, and the movement, he proposed to make before the rainy season.

I have applied to the War Department for information upon this subject; and have been permitted to look at that part of the correspondence with General Taylor, which relates to past events, and has thus become matter of history. I will state its bearing upon the last campaign.

In a letter from the War Department of June 8, 1846, to General Taylor, the Secretary of War, after informing him of the proposed augmentation of his force, and making some judicious suggestions, remarks that, "In taking positions, I need 'scarcely observe, that the means of getting sup-'plies, transporting munitions of war, as well as 'the ability to keep open the channels, by which 'these supplies and munitions are to be furnished, 'are points to be well considered," &c. "The 'President is desirous of receiving your views and 'suggestions, in relation to the fall campaign. His 'determination is to have the war prosecuted with 'vigor, and to embrace in the objects to be com-'passed in that campaign, such as will dispose the 'enemy to desire an end of the war. Shall the 'campaign be conducted with a view of striking 'at the city of Mexico, or confined, so far as re-'gards the forces under your immediate command, 'to the northern provinces of Mexico? Your views 'on this point will doubtless have an important 'influence on the determination of the Government 'here. Should an army penetrate far into the in-'terior of Mexico, how are supplies to be obtained? 'Can they be, to any considerable extent, drawn 'from the enemy's country, or must they be ob-'tained from the United States? These are very 'important questions, and the answers to them 'will have an important bearing in settling the plan 'and objects of the campaign," &c.

"It is important to know your opinion of the 'description of troops best adapted to operations 'in the interior of Mexico; what portion should 'be infantry, artillery, cavalry, &c. A peace must 'be conquered in the shortest space of time prac-'ticable; your views of the manner of doing it 'are requested. It is not doubted, that you will 'push your advantages to the utmost extent it can 'done, with *the means at your command.*"

General Taylor, in answer, stated very clearly the nature of the operations, which should take place, and the difficulties attending them, resulting principally from deficient means of transportation, and from a want of *breadstuffs*. Considering the distance from Camargo to Mexico, and the nature of the country, and its want of resources, he looked upon that line of operations as an impracticable one. He was therefore of opinion, that operations upon that frontier should be confined to cutting off the northern provinces, and, in that point of view, he thought the expedition to Chihuahua of great importance. He says he has abstained from any reference to movements against Tampico, or Vera Cruz, because the yellow fever would not have permitted us to hold either, and he deemed it best to undertake no movement in that direction, at that season of the year. He proposed the taking of Tampico when the season should favor, which would not be until November or December. So far as I have been permitted to see the correspondence, I find nothing which controls the discretion of General Taylor. Views are indicated and suggestions made, and very properly made. But he is left to act as his own judgment dictates, in the operations intrusted to him. And it is but an act of justice, sir, to say, that the instructions of the War Department are prepared with ability and a wise forecast, creditable to the officer at the head of it. They will bear the test of the severest scrutiny.

Three columns, then, sir, moved upon Mexico. One, under General Taylor, invading its northeastern frontier. Another, under General Wool, striking at the provinces higher up the Rio Grande, and in communication with the preceding column, and subject to the order of General Taylor. And a third, entered New Mexico and took possession of its capital, Santa Fé. It thence moved on, through California to the Pacific, where it has no doubt arrived ere this time, and where it will eventually put itself in communication with the regiment sent by sea from New York; when the whole force will unite and occupy the commanding points of the country. Our flag now waves upon the shores of the Pacific as well as upon those of the Atlantic; and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California, a distance following the boundary of our possessions of almost two thousand miles, we have overrun and occupied the enemy's territory. I have caused an estimate—rather a vague one, indeed—to be made of the extent of country belonging to Mexico which we hold, and I am informed it exceeds six hundred thousand square miles, while the portion yet subject to the Mexican Government contains but about four hundred thousand square miles. And the population of the region possessed by us amounts to at least one million of inhabitants. In the mean time, three splendid victories have been gained, and the Mexican coast blockaded and almost hermetically sealed. And we are yet in the ninth month of the war. I shall not stop, sir, to speak of the results in terms of eulogy. They need no such tribute from me. They speak for themselves, and appeal to the head and heart of every American, in justification of the conduct of the Government of his

country, and of the armies sent out to maintain her honor. Looking at the distance and the difficulties of the operations, to do this required energy, ability, and promptitude; and these qualities have been displayed, and have had their true rewards, in the success that has crowned their exertion.